

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 004613

SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR AF/E, DRL/BL, AND EUR/WE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/20/2012

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ECIN](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [ZI](#) [ER](#) [ECIN](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [ZI](#) [ER](#) [IT](#) [SADC](#) [ITPREL](#) [SADC](#)

SUBJECT: GOI: IF WE SANCTION ZIMBABWE, WHY NOT ERITREA?

REF: A. STATE 175001

[B](#). ROME 3604

CLASSIFIED BY: POLMINCOUNS T. COUNTRYMAN FOR REASONS
1.5 (B) AND (D)

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ROME 04613 01 OF 02 250026Z

[1](#). (U) THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST; PLEASE SEE PARA 9.

SUMMARY

[1](#)2. (C) POLMINCOUNS DELIVERED TO MFA ASSISTANT
SECRETARY-EQUIVALENT CABRAS REF A DEMARCHE ENJOINING THE EU

SIPDIS
NOT TO INVITE ZIMBABWE TO ITS FALL MEETING WITH THE SOUTHERN
AFRICA DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC). NOTING THAT THE EU WAS
CONSIDERING CHANGING VENUES AS A COMPROMISE, CABRAS TOOK THE
OPPORTUNITY TO OPEN A DISCUSSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY,
USING ERITREA AS AN EXAMPLE. THE GOI WOULD LIKE WASHINGTON'S
INPUT ON HOW TO DEAL WITH DICTATORSHIPS LIKE ASMARA. CABRAS
APPEARS TO BELIEVE THAT SANCTIONS AND CRITICISM LEAD TO
CONFRONTATION, WHICH CAN BREAK DOWN COMMUNICATION. END
SUMMARY.

THE AFRICAN CONTEXT: SANCTIONS LEAD TO CONFRONTATION

[1](#)3. (C) ON SEPTEMBER 18, POLMINCOUNS DELIVERED REF A
DEMARCHE ASKING THE EU TO EXCLUDE ZIMBABWE FROM ITS NOVEMBER
MEETING WITH SADC TO BRUNO CABRAS, MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN AFFAIRS. THIS EXCHANGE FOLLOWED A JULY
17 DISCUSSION ON THE SAME SUBJECT BETWEEN POLOFF AND MFA
OFFICE DIRECTOR MARIO BOLOGNA (REF B). LIKE BOLOGNA, CABRAS
MADE NO PROMISES.

[1](#)4. (C) AFTER STATING THAT THE EU MIGHT HOLD THE MEETING IN
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ROME 04613 01 OF 02 250026Z
MAPUTO INSTEAD OF EUROPE IN ORDER TO PREVENT MUGABE FROM
USING IT TO LEGITIMIZE HIMSELF IN THE WEST, CABRAS ARGUED
THAT ZIMBABWE "SHOULD BE SEEN IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT." HE
NOTED THAT THE ZIMBABWE CRISIS HAS SPARKED AN AFRICAN
CONFRONTATION WITH THE WEST IN MULTILATERAL FORA. CABRAS
CITED GABONESE PRESIDENT BONGO'S 9/17 UNGA STATEMENT CALLING
FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY NOT TO IMPOSE SANCTIONS ON
COUNTRIES NOT YET ABLE TO LIVE UP TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE
NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT (NEPAD). CABRAS
SAID THAT NOT INVITING ZIMBABWE TO THE SADC MEETING WOULD BE
VIEWED AS A SANCTION, AND THAT AFRICAN COUNTRIES WORRIED THAT
SANCTIONS WOULD ESTABLISH A PRECEDENT THAT COULD BE LATER
APPLIED TO THEM. UNDER THE EU-ACP COTONOU AGREEMENT,
DEMOCRACY, GOOD GOVERNANCE, AND HUMAN RIGHTS WERE BASIC
AGREED VALUES, BUT TO IMPOSE IMMEDIATE COMPLIANCE WOULD BE
DIFFICULT. AFRICANS SEE SANCTIONS AS THE WRONG APPROACH AND
TEND TO RALLY AROUND SANCTIONED COUNTRIES.

"DO WE GO ABOUT BASHING ALL THE DICTATORS ON THE HEAD?"

[1](#)5. (C) CABRAS THEN OPENED A BROAD-RANGING DISCUSSION ON
HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY. HE ASKED, PERHAPS RHETORICALLY, "SHOULD
WE MOVE TO OPEN OTHER FRONTS (SIC)? SHOULD WE SANCTION OTHER
COUNTRIES? DO WE GO ABOUT BASHING ALL THE DICTATORS ON THE
HEAD? THIS IS THE POINT TO CONVEY TO WASHINGTON." HE WANTED
TO KNOW IF WASHINGTON WOULD SUPPORT SIMILAR "SANCTIONS" ON A
COUNTRY LIKE ERITREA, WHICH HAS NOT HELD EVEN PARLIAMENTARY
ELECTIONS IN TEN YEARS AND IMPRISONS ITS POLITICAL OPPONENTS.
ON THE OTHER HAND, THE GOI DOES NOT WANT TO JEOPARDIZE THE
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ROME 04613 01 OF 02 250026Z
PEACE PROCESS WITH ETHIOPIA AND, ACCORDING TO CNN, THERE ARE
TWO AL-QAEDA BASES IN ERITREA THAT HAD TO BE CONSIDERED
"BEFORE YOU START TO DESTABILIZE."

16. (C) POLMINCOUNS REPLIED THAT THE USG BELIEVES THAT COMMUNICATION WITH A GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE CUT OFF ONLY IN EXTREME CASES IN WHICH OTHER MEANS HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED AND WE MUST SHOW PEOPLE THAT THEIR LEADER HAS NO INTERNATIONAL LEGITIMACY. CALLING A REFUSAL TO MEET WITH A GOVERNMENT A SANCTION IS INACCURATE. THE OAU AND SADC ARE INCLINED TO CHALLENGE MOVES LIKE THIS, BUT IT IS NOT UNREASONABLE TO HOLD SADC MEMBERS TO THEIR STATED VALUES. FINALLY, IT IS SYMBOLICALLY IMPORTANT FOR THE EU TO EXCLUDE ZIMBABWE, AND THERE ARE SEVERAL ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO GET THE WORK DONE.

17. (C) CABRAS CONTINUED UNFAZED: MUGABE HAS BEEN REPRESSIVE FOR 22 YEARS. IF WE EXCLUDE ZIMBABWE NOW, PEOPLE WILL ASK WHY. POLMINCOUNS AGREED THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BE COMPLETELY EQUITABLE. CABRAS REITERATED THAT HE WANTED "IDEAS ABOUT ERITREA FROM YOUR ADMINISTRATION." THE COUNTRY IS STRATEGICALLY LOCATED AND COOPERATIVE IN THE PEACE PROCESS BUT REACTS NEGATIVELY TO PRESSURE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY. POLMINCOUNS SAID THAT HE HAD NOT SEEN ANY INDICATION THAT THE USG HAD THE SAME LEVEL OF CONCERN ABOUT THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN ERITREA

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ5627

PAGE 01 ROME 04613 02 OF 02 250033Z
ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	EB-00	EUR-00
	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00
	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-00	PM-00
	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00
	T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00

/007W

-----EC54D4 250033Z /21

R 231539Z SEP 02
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5951
INFO EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 ROME 004613

SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR AF/E, DRL/BL, AND EUR/WE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/20/2012

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ECIN](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [ZI](#) [ER](#) [ECIN](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [ZI](#) [ER](#) [IT](#) [SADC](#) [ITPREL](#) [SADC](#)
SUBJECT: GOI: IF WE SANCTION ZIMBABWE, WHY NOT ERITREA?

AS IN ZIMBABWE.

COMMENT: WHY ERITREA?

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ROME 04613 02 OF 02 250033Z

18. (C) ERITREA WOULD HARDLY APPEAR TO BE THE SECOND-WORST HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSER ON THE CONTINENT, BUT CABRAS' RESPONSE APPEARS BOTH A DEFLECTION OF AN UNWELCOME DEMARCHE AND AN ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ON ERITREA POLICY. AS A FORMER COLONY OF ITALY, ERITREA IS MORE ON THE RADAR SCREEN IN ROME THAN IS ZIMBABWE. IN ADDITION, THE GOI IS PEEVED BECAUSE IN OCTOBER 2001, THE GOE EXPELLED THE GOI AMBASSADOR IN ASMARA AFTER HE PROTESTED (ON BEHALF OF THE EU) A NUMBER OF POLITICALLY-MOTIVATED ARRESTS. THE GOE CLAIMED HE WAS INVOLVED IN ESPIONAGE. TEN DAYS LATER, WHEN AMEMBASSY ASMARA ISSUED ITS OWN CRITICISM OF THE ARRESTS, TWO LOCAL U.S. EMBASSY EMPLOYEES WERE ARRESTED ON SIMILAR CHARGES. END COMMENT.

19. (C) ACTION REQUEST: PLEASE PROVIDE UPDATE WE CAN SHARE WITH CABRAS ON THE USG APPROACH TOWARD ERITREA, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY.
SEMBLER

CONFIDENTIAL

>

2002ROME04613 - Classification: CONFIDENTIAL